

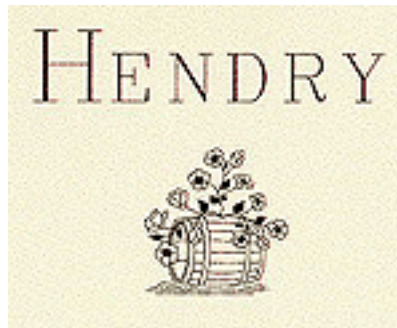
HENDRY

Napa

George Hendry's family property just west of the town of Napa was cow pasture and cherry orchard with a mere three acres of zinfandel when he began planting in 1972. "Conventional wisdom was that you'd go broke growing grapes here and that was correct given the economics of the forties and fifties," says George. "You had to produce large crops then to make ends meet and that just doesn't work on this site." Nowadays, the yields are low, and the quality has resulted in contracts with many of Napa's best-known wineries. His "Block 7" Zinfandel, as vinified by Kent Rosenblum of Alameda, became a benchmark for that variety.

But this was not enough for the physicist turned grape grower. Spurred on by his experimental instincts, his study of French viticulture and winemaking ... and no doubt too by pride in his burgeoning reputation as a grower of Cabernet, Chardonnay, Pinot and Zin, George began in the early nineties to vinify and bottle himself. Each estate wine from a distinct block on the Hendry ranch will seldom exceed a thousand cases total production.

George's property enjoys the morning fog and afternoon breeze typical of Carneros, which lies just to the south. As he puts it, "We're a little warmer than Carneros, but a heck of a lot colder than Oakville." Part of the so-called "Franciscan Melange", his land is a geological crazy quilt which George subjects to rigorous scientific study, not resting until he has at least begun to unlock the secrets that make one parcel give one sort of wine and its neighbor another. "Terroir is a very powerful operator," says George, "and it operates here over very short differences. It's not something subtle." Clonal selection, trellising, matching vines to geological and micro-climatic



patterns and countless other vineyard details consume whatever time George doesn't spend on his cyclotron business.

Opportunities to replant have allowed the wine to further benefit from observation and experiment. "We really knew very little when we first laid out the vineyards," George admits, "and I was heavily influenced by the fact that I was in danger of going broke!" There are new varieties now, too: malbec, pinot gris, petit verdot "We need another product like we need a hole in the head," says George in mock seriousness. But curiosity and the pursuit of distinctively delicious fruit seem to override the control of his "product line" and we shall all be richer for that!

The Hendry style is one of finesse and refinement. These wines are rich, but not overtly "big", always full of fruit but never - even when harvested at high ripeness - are they in the least jammy. His own sternest critic, George won't release a wine under his estate label unless it satisfies his highest expectations. So, for instance, there was no 1996 Hendry Cabernet.

"I have always loved zinfandels, but it is getting hard to stick with the old favorites like Ridge with prices climbing [above] the \$30 level. This makes the Hendry Block 7 Zinfandel ... a terrific buy."

- John Long,

Cleveland Plain Dealer [12/97]

Total acreage: 115

Average production: 6,000 cases
(only selected blocks are vinified & estate-bottled)

Varieties: Pinot noir, chardonnay, zinfandel, cabernet sauv., plus small recent plantings of cabernet franc, malbec, petit verdot & pinot gris.

Zinfandel "Block 7"

This block is the Hendry "classic". Block 7 Zin, shows black and blue fruit and black pepper, with a subtle touch of oak.

Zinfandel "Block 28"

Very limited lots of Zinfandel from "block 28" are also released each year.

Zinfandel Napa ["Ranch Zin"]

Occasionally, the excellent performance of several youthful blocks of Zin (blocks with appropriately august clonal heritage!) permitted the blending of a non-designate.

Primitivo Napa

2001 represents the inaugural bottling!

Chardonnay "Blocks 9 & 21"

Block 21 vines are selected from an old, small-berried Wente clone. Block 9's vines are an old field selection, its clusters small and its berries irregular in size but consistently concentrated in flavor! Thin soils and sparse bunches provide ample raw material for barrel fermentation.

Chardonnay "Blocks 19 & 20"

Representing a new (1999) point of departure for Hendry, this wine is from parcels planted in 1996 to Burgundian clones.

Pinot Noir

Old Joseph Swan field selection and new Burgundian clones from three blocks, harvested mid-September. Traditional Burgundian élevage in small (55% new) casks. "A lot of the industry is in denial about yield effects in chardonnay and pinot noir," says George. "Notus!"

Cabernet Sauvignon "Block 8"

This quarter-century-old block is quickly becoming as celebrated as the "#7". A blend with Malbec, Merlot & Cabernet Franc and a high percentage of new barrels characterize the vinificatory regime.

Pinot Gris

An occasional new treat!